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Huayru

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

HUAYRU

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF IMAGING ARTS AND SCIENCES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN DEPARTMENT

BY
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To my family

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CHAPTER 1

THESIS SUMMARY

Culture is not static; human societies change in response to variations on their natural surroundings, politics, technology development, migration dynamics, etc. Traditions and values within cultures are affected by these changes; those things that could have made sense to practice or to believe in at some point in time, could eventually change dramatically or disappear.

Individuals with a recalcitrant sense of cultural conservationism would argue that those changes in general are negative and should be avoided. I strongly disagree with this perspective. I believe that changes in culture should be understood and accepted, and they are not necessarily harmful. Moreover, I think that their acceptance or rejection should be a choice left to each individual involved.



Fig. 1. Indigenous man from the Andes

This image shows an indigenous person from the Andes mountain range wearing what seem to be a “cowboy” hat and a “skate boarding” sweater, both objects are representative of a foreign culture. Why he chose to wear those items instead of traditional clothing such as a straw hat and a poncho is his decision and should be respected.

On the other hand, I also believe that, whether a culture loses its traditions or not, preserving knowledge about them is positive. Knowing about the past could help understand the present and provide valuable resources for facing the future. Knowing, for example, that the indigenous man from the image could be wearing a straw hat and a poncho is a way to better understand him and his cultural environment.

For this project, I will design a board game based on Huayru, a traditional ritual game played by some indigenous people from the Andes mountain range for centuries. Mostly played currently at funerals, this tradition is considered to be in extinction: “No one plays Huayru anymore” said an elder from an indigenous community in Sigsig, Ecuador. The disappearance of this tradition is due to the multiple changes and transitions that these indigenous conglomerates experienced through time. It is not among my objectives to reintroduce the practice of the ritual; instead, I will aim to rescue its memory and transmit knowledge about it by designing a different game using the elements of the original as inspiration.

I will try to emphasize the role of design practice in keeping the memory of traditional knowledge. As opposed to academic compendiums, museum exhibits, articles in specialized magazines, etc., an object, such as a game, has the potential of reaching a considerably broader and more diverse audience.

This project will also constitute a commentary on the capability that objects have to transmit cultural knowledge and values. How much of the concepts behind the design of the cowboy hat and the sweater is absorbed by the indigenous man from the image? The product I will develop will transmit to the user as much of the concept utilized for its creation as is possible.

Now, why did I choose a game?

Primitive society performs its sacred rites, its sacrifices, consecrations, and mysteries, all of which serve to guarantee the well-being of the world, in a spirit of pure play truly understood.

Now in myth and ritual the great instinctive forces of civilized life have their origin: law and order, commerce and profit, craft and art, poetry, wisdom and science. All are rooted in the primeval soil of play. (Huizinga 1970, 23)

Through the study of games, anthropologists have been able to find valuable information about human conglomerates and their cultural behavior. This is the case with the game called Huayru. The data found about it has revealed important clues that help to better understand the nature and religious vision of South American pre-Hispanic people. Playing Huayru represents to them, not only a way to spend time and avoid monotony, but also a complex interaction with their spiritual world projected through their cultural values. Moreover, many of the elements of the game reflect a particular way to understand the world from an aesthetic, religious and political point of view (Ordóñez 2004, 4).

Components of thesis

This thesis begins with an overview of the original game. This section will constitute an exposition of my findings during the research stage. I will explain the original Huayru game in terms of the significance, elements, rules and concepts associated with it. All the information provided in this analysis will be used as a foundation that will guide the design decisions for the new game.

Following, there will be a description of the design process, which will lead to the presentation of the design of the new game. This section will describe how I applied the different elements of the original Huayru in an attempt to preserve its memory and project knowledge about it.

Finally, the reader will find my commentaries and recommendations about production processes for the new game and their impact on the overall design proposal.

Necessity of thesis

Indigenous people from the Andes are gradually losing their traditions. Diverse factors, such as emigration, trading, technological imports, religious restrictions, etc., can be understood as reasons for this loss. This project is an effort to preserve knowledge about one of these traditions in danger of extinction: Huayru. This is my contribution as a designer to the understanding of cultures. Several times I have been asked: “When do people play this game?” My response usually is: “Mostly during funerals nowadays.” The first reaction to this answer is amazement, even amusement. Then, immediately after listening to the reasons why they do it and the significance of the ritual, people show respect and interest.

Also, this project is an opportunity for me to demonstrate that design practice can benefit from knowledge of history and the ancient. When facing design problems, most of the time designers refer to new or future trends to get inspiration. Sometimes this leads to the production of “more of the same” objects. Taking a look at the past could provide examples of how problems were solved and could open opportunities for design to have more cultural value.

Latin American artists and crafters often rely on the richness of forms, colors and materials that identify object production of their cultures. By using these autochthonous recognizable details in their work, they expect to gain access to international markets with their crafts. I believe that, because of this practice, concepts and spiritual values of these cultures get lost and are neglected. This new game, which will come out as the product of this project, will use both: concept and aesthetic from the Andes.

Goals

The goals of this project are both general and specific. The general goal will be to demonstrate that design practice can play an important role in the preservation of traditional knowledge. The specific goal will be to design a board game based on Huayru with the potential of introducing to the general public basic notions about this tradition and, with them, some aspects of the pre-Hispanic cultures. It will aim to rescue the game’s memory.

Limitations

Time is the main limitation for this project. There are three main stages to consider in the game design process: “1: deciding on the overall form of the package, 2: producing prototype versions for all materials required, 3: Field testing and revising the package” (Ellington, Addinall, and Percival 1982, 28). After presenting a prototype version of the new game, several field testing sessions were held, however I believe that this field testing could continue for some time, to provide more information about how the game can be improved.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINAL HUAYRU

In my efforts to introduce what I understand about the original game of Huayru, I present, to begin with, some definitions found in texts I used as reference:

A small truncated pyramid-shaped object, carved in wood, bone or stone, or molded in clay. The faces and bases of these objects have engravings which were interpreted in different ways when played as a European die. In pre-Hispanic times, such items were produced to dialog with the huaca¹. They persist into the XXth² century as a funerary ritual and as a game of chance. The pre-Hispanic dispersion of this class of object comprises the Tahuantinsuyu³ and is a useful feature to determine Inca presence in regions with little monumental construction. (Gentile 1998, 75)

Huayru is a ritual of pre-Hispanic origin expanded to the Territory of Tahuantinsuyo during the period of Inca expansion and associated to the re-structure of moments of change in a broad range of spaces of the Andean society. Presently, its practice has been reduced to funerary contexts. (Ordóñez 2004, 4, my translation)



Fig. 2. Cemetery at Sigsig

These short and general definitions give an introductory idea. We have to bare in mind the fact that the game has been studied by many authors, with different specific purposes and from diverse points of view. Thus, it is complex and challenging to comment on every detail found. It is also remarkable the quantity of versions of the game and the differences between them; this is due to the changes that the people who practiced, or practice it, have experienced through their cultural history. However, it is important to gather as much knowledge as possible in order to introduce a properly supported design solution.

Following, I present a summary of what I suggest are the most relevant aspects of the game from all the sources I was able to use for the research. These sources consist primarily of research articles written by anthropologists interested in the topic and a field research conducted in Sigsig, Ecuador (a small canton located near the city of Cuenca where the tradition is still in practice) in June-July 2005.

¹ This term refers to elements considered to be sacred by pre-Hispanic cultures.

² The citation dates from 1998. The game is still played in the 21st century.

³ The term "Tahuantinsuyu" refers to the four regions in which the Inca Empire was divided.

The purpose of the game

Huayru was used for three purposes: 1) to distribute the expenses of the funeral ceremony to give food and drinks to the contestants; 2) to allocate (that is, reconfirm the distribution) of the belongings of the deceased; and 3) to foretell the will of the soul of the deceased. (Brownrigg 1989, 29, my translation)

Huayru has reached our days as a funerary ritual. Among the functions it serves during these contemporary ceremonies we find:

- Help the soul of the deceased reach the afterworld
- Make people pray for the soul
- Distribute his belongings
- Determine who pays for the expenses of the ceremony (alcohol, food, etc)
- Determine whether or not the spirit has “unfinished business” on the world of the living
- To keep people awake through the night
- As plain entertainment

Out of the strict funerary context, we find that the game used to serve diverse objectives for the ritual world of the Andes. They are among others:

- To legitimize the transaction of material possessions.
- To act as a mediator in conflicts.
- To relieve tensions generated in the transition between two different stages of life.
- To get the favor of the gods in agriculture related rituals.

The players

From the sources consulted, it can be noticed a variety of versions about who was supposed to play Huayru. In the times of the Inca Empire, it seems that the game was restricted to the “nobility.” Currently in the funerary context the players are:

- Any one invited to the funeral
- Any one who is not family of the dead
- Men only
- People over 10 years old only
- Children too
- The players must gather in two teams

Material elements

The die

A carved object made of bone or wood. It has the shape of a truncated pyramid with five, six or seven lateral sides, a top and a base. These faces show carved circles of medium size that determine the points; these circles are always surrounded by smaller circles with a dot in their centers, crosses, etc. These elements create an impression of disorder. (Cereceda and others 1987, 166, my translation)



Fig. 3. Ancient dice. Archaeological Museum. Universidad de Cuenca

As noticed by comparing this description with the definition of Huayru presented in the beginning of this section, there are many versions of Huayru dice. Notice that they could be made of a broad variety of materials, have different numbers of sides and have different rules associated with it. Here I present a summary list of the data collected about it:

-Materials: it could be made, among others, of: llama bone, cow bone, yucca, ceramic, stone, tapioca, wood.

-Number of sides: four, five, six, seven. It seems that this can vary depending on the time and area where the game was practiced. The most common dice have six lateral sides, a top and a base.

-Shapes of the symbols: Crosses, concentric circles, dots, circles with dots in the middle, holes, black painted holes, colored lines, representations of the sun and the moon, etc.

-Size: its height varies from 6 to 12 cm, its width from 2 to 4. This may be not exact and definitive, but gives a general idea of proportions.

-Game rules associated with the die: In most of the cases studied, there is a face of the die with no marks; some call it “llampu”. This side generally signifies “bad luck”. In the majority of versions of Huayru, if the die falls in an upright position the player (or team) wins the game. This is considered good luck and a symbol of appreciation from the spirit.

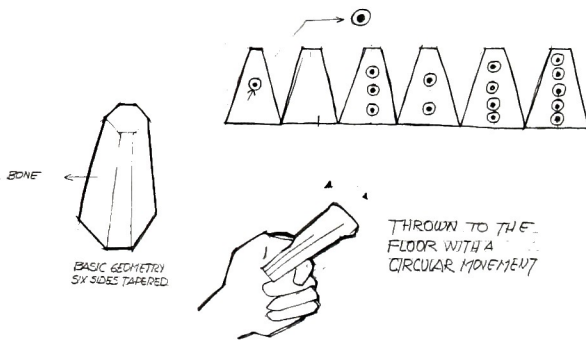


Fig. 4. Dice schemes

-Ancient dice made of bone have two special characteristics: they display beautiful polished surfaces that are a product of aging; they also display some kind of perforation in the base of the face that marks the number five. This perforation seems to be an arterial cavity of the bone; is a mystery so far what its function is, and why it is located in that particular face; maybe this cavity has a ritual function (Santiago Ordóñez, personal communication, June 2005). This could be a powerful detail to keep in mind during the project for the design proposal of the die.



Fig. 5. Ancient die. Archaeological Museum. Universidad de Cuenca

The board

One of the formal parts of the game implies counting the points achieved by throwing the die and represented by kernels of different colors or little pebbles. This counting is made on a board that consists of a system of circular indentations, with five big circles called “casa”, which are the start and finish spots. Between these “casas” there are four smaller circles that draw a path between “casas” (Ordóñez 2004, 85).

Here, I provide some details about the boards:

-Materials: wood, agave leaves. For some instances of Huayru no board was necessary; drawing the paths and the circles on the ground was enough (Cereceda and others 1987, 162).

-Sizes: Some of the boards studied by anthropologists (Hartmann and Oberem 1984, 72) measure 22.5cm by 14cm. This gives us an idea of the proportions.

-Shapes and disposition of elements: there are several versions of the dispositions of the holes and the paths described by them. Among them we find:

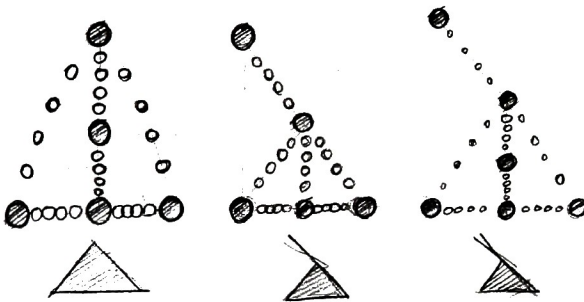


Fig. 6. Configurations of holes on boards

The counters

Bertonio (1879) in his *Vocabulario de la Lengua Aymara* provides the following translation from an indigenous language to Spanish:

Huayrusitha, Piscasitha: jugar con vnas piedrecitas adelantandolas en sus hoytos[sic]. segun los puntos de vna manera de dado grande en vnos destos juegos van adelantando las piedras alderredor o en circulo; en otros dando vuelta como rio. (cited in Cereceda and others 1998, 84)

Here, I provide my translation in English from this definition in old style Spanish:

Huayrusitha, Piscasitha: to play with little pebbles, making them go forward through little holes according to the points given by a big die. In some of these games, these little pebbles go around or in circles...

From this antique definition of the game we have a general idea of the role the counters play. These counters are used to keep record of the points and determine a winner. In some cases the winner is determined by the number of counters he/she can gather; in others, by a “finish” spot on the board where the winner counter has to land.

By looking at all the sources I was able to gather, these little counters could be among others:

- Little pebbles
- Corn kernels
- Broad beans
- Kidney beans
- Colored corn kernels

An experience playing the original game

Given the amount and diversity of Huayru versions, which vary according to the area or time were it is, or was, played, it is difficult to present a set of rules that make sense and at the same time summarize all. Here, I describe a particular Huayru game, the one that I was able to experience, not by reading articles or visiting museums, but the one that was explained directly to me by the people who practice the tradition currently. I was able to play this Huayru match out of the funerary context given the obvious difficulties of finding a real funeral.



Fig. 7. Huayru set at don Félix's Place

“Venga, venga no más, ya traen el Huayru para que vea” -“Come, just come, someone will soon bring the Huayru so you can see it”- (don Félix, personal communication, July, 2005).

Don Félix is the oldest member of a family in a rural community near Sigsig. I found him sitting on a stool in the yard of his small house almost in the middle of the mountains. I had asked his neighbors for information about the game and they led me to his place.

Don Félix has the game pieces for rent. He had no problems showing me the game, and even playing it with me. The game pieces seemed to be very old. The board was made of wood, the die was made of bone (maybe llama, maybe cow, he did not explain). Both elements had

a usage patina and were remarkably well crafted. My host made his daughter set all the pieces just like it is done in funerals; she lit a candle and gave us a corn kernel and a kidney bean. The board was placed on an estera (some kind of straw mat) where the die was supposed to be thrown.



Fig. 8. Die and board at don Félix's place in Sigsig

The die had six sides, five of them marked with concentric circles: one in one side, two in the other, three, four and five. One of the sides or faces did not have any mark; don Félix told me that that its name was Lluchu (naked). The face with one mark had some kind of arrow drawn on it; my host told me that this particular face was called the Huayru face.

The board of this particular set had the following disposition:

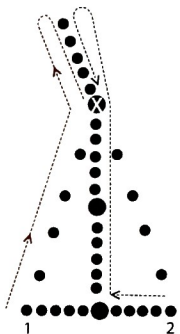


Fig. 9. Configuration of paths of don Félix's board

The game begun:

-First, each one had to throw the die in turns until someone got a Huayru face. It was me, so I started the game with the kernel in spot 1. Spot 2 was for don Félix. Spot X was the goal.

-In my first throw the die gave me a one; that is a Huayru face. So I was able to take a short cut, shown in the diagram above as the path on the left. My host got a three, so he had to take the other path moving his kernel three spots.

- After playing and moving the kernels forward for a while, I was about to win; all I needed was a two to reach the goal. I got a five, so I was instructed to return to the starting point. I had to get the exact number in order to win.

-If someone had thrown the die so it landed in an upright position or “standing” he would have become the winner instantly.

-If someone had got an empty face or Lluchu (which could be translated as “naked”), he would have lost a turn. This is bad luck.

-If someone had got a Huayru face at any time, he would have been able to move the Kernel to the next big circle. These big circles were called “casas”.

-We kept playing this way for about ten minutes, there was no winner.

After the match, don Félix and I had a short conversation. He told me that the game was played by two teams, and the number of players did not really matter. Each team had to name a “kallay” or captain. Children, women, men, any one was invited. Whoever lost had to pay some money that was then donated to the widow and lead the prayers for the soul. This Huayru game set had been in the don Félix’s family for years.

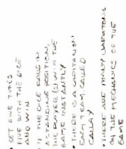
Concepts associated to the game

As I commented before, the broad time frame, the different places and different communities where Huayru takes place, make it a complex topic to confront. However, it is this complexity that gives it its richness in a conceptual level. Here it is a list of some of the concepts connected to the game, with an effort to list only the most common:

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| -Dialogues with gods and spirits | -Beauty | -The number five |
| -Relations to European games | -Love | -Transitions |
| -Survival of Inca Tradition | -Christian vs. Indigenous | -Conflict |
| -Generosity | -Luck | -Sacred |
| -Water and rivers | -Disorder | -Faith |
| -Huayru as a name, as a word | -Ambiguity | -Sin |
| -Feminine | -Asymmetry | |
| -Politics | -Beauty and seduction | |
| -Pairs of opposition, dualities: | -Peace | |
| Beauty-ugliness | -Happiness | |
| Female-evil | -Animals: | |
| Beauty-evil | Spider | |
| Beauty-death | Bat | |
| Health illness | Llama | |
| Life-death | Owl | |
| -Space-time | Dog | |
| -Dead-living | Donkey | |

After gathering information about the original game, the idea is to utilize it efficiently to face the design challenge. I will use this information in a Mindmapping exercise. As a brainstorming method in design, Mindmapping facilitates the consideration of ideas related to a certain concept during ideation stages. A central concept is chosen and ideas related to it are then written down; all this ideas are then used to inspire the solution of the design problem.

For this project, the central concept is “the original Huayru”, and entries on the Mindmaps are data taken from the research. By using this method, I intend to make the design of the new Huayru have a strong connection with the original tradition. The following illustrations show examples of mind mapping exercises used for ideation; they can be made of either graphics or text. During the next chapter -Design of the New Huayru- I present explanations about how these entries of the Mindmaps inspire the design solution.



13

The original Huayru



Fig. 11. Text Mindmapping

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE NEW HUAYRU

Design of board

We know now that some versions of the original Huayru are generally played by two teams of an undetermined number of players each. Every member of the team has his chance to throw the die to make the counter move. For the new game, this rule was changed: the number of players is two to five and each player has his own space on the board.

One of the principal considerations that influenced this rule change is the importance of the number five for the indigenous, especially in connection to the game and funerary rituals. Numbers in general play an important role in the original game, not only for the mechanical aspects of it, but also as concepts and symbolic values. We could identify a special attention given to the number five in some indigenous traditions like funerals: the souls are supposed to remain five days within the living, the funerary rituals are supposed to last five days, etc. Five is the winning number in the Huayru die; the face marked with that number, or the inferior numbers that add five, permit to win the game (Ordóñez 2004, 10).

Also, the idea of making the numbers of players be two to five it is more convenient. It is easier to gather that amount of players than gathering two teams with equal amount of members.

The structure for the board, where the Individual Paths eventually meet and lead to the Common Path, was envisioned using a character from a traditional Inca myth as inspiration. In this myth, we could identify some ideas related to Huayru, ideas that we previously listed as part of the research.

V. Cereceda (1987) in her work: *Aproximaciones a una Estética Indígena: de la Belleza al Tinku*, uses the following story to explain her points of view about the Indigenous understanding of concepts such as beauty:

The myth of the illness of Inka Tupaj Yupanki

During the rule of Inka Tupaj Yupanki, strange signals appeared in the sky, the earth and the sea. People had to consult about them to the wak'a, the local gods, wanting to find out what they meant. The wak'a then predicted the invasion and destruction of the Inca Kingdom by foreigners. This omen worried so much the Inca ruler, that he became seriously ill after hearing the news.

The Inca ruler was then taken to a place with pleasant weather near the capital of the kingdom (Cuzco). Several healing rituals and sacrifices were held there trying to preserve his health. The wak'a were consulted again about the future of the Inca, this time they predicted that he would survive. Since that moment, this place with pleasant weather was called Mana Wañunqa, which means "He will not die."

Worried about the health of Tupaj Yupanki, his brother, the prince Tupac Amaru, went with him to Mana Wañunga. There, he and a group of members of the nobility, played several games.

One of those days, while Tupac Amaru was playing, he noticed a group of beautiful ladies contemplating the games. Suddenly, he fell in love with the most beautiful of them: Kusichimpu. After a while, the prince found a moment to declare his love to her but was rejected. Desperate by the rejection, Tupac Amaru decided to wander in pain. Reflecting in sadness about his impossible love, he found a spring and sat to cry.

Suddenly, the prince saw a spider that the natives called Kusi Kusi, and which they consider a good premonition. While staring at it, he noticed the presence of two serpents (male and female) that were coming from among the flowers of the beautiful spring. The male serpent was trying to couple with the always reluctant female. He found a white flower and touched her with it. The touch of the flower made the female serpent succumb to the wishes of the male. Exited about this discovery, Tupac Amaru took another of these white flowers and went to touch it to his beloved Kusichimpu, who then yielded to his desires.

Since then, the prince was called Amaru after the serpents. Amaru means serpent in quechua -one of the languages spoken by the Incas- (Cereceda and others 1987, 139).

During the analysis of the story, the author makes the reader note the importance of games as mediators between the life and the death of the Inca. This is one of the reasons why this myth was chosen as inspiration for the design of the board in the first place.

All the characters and elements on the tale are important by themselves and could be providers of information about Inca traditions and cultural vision.

When reflecting about the spider Kusi Kusi, Cereceda (1987) emphasizes the fact that it is a good omen and acts as a prelude for the discovery of the flower by Tupac Amaru. The author also makes us notice the close relationship between Kusi and Kusichimpu. “Kusi” could mean “happiness”, and is the word used to name both: the beautiful lady and the spider. The other part of the name of this beautiful lady is “Chinpu,” which means “halo.” Now, if we think about the anatomy of a spider as a central circle from where limbs irradiate, it is possible to make a link between its shape and the shape of a halo (Chinpu).

The spider was selected as inspiration for the design of the board because, here in the story, it acts as a mediator in a conflict, and relates to the idea of beauty given its close relationship with the beautiful lady. Notice that “conflict”, “beauty”, “feminine” and “luck” are all concepts associated with the original Huayru, as I stated in the initial part of this project. Kusi is also part of an Inca tale that deals with the importance of games for their society.

Design process for board

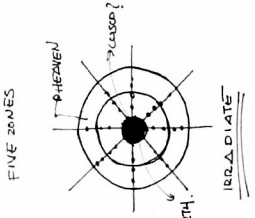
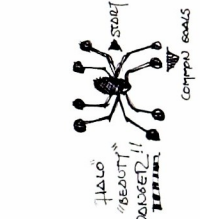
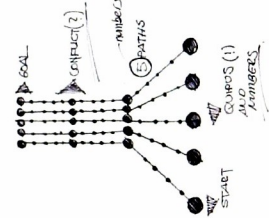
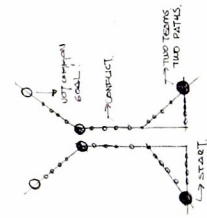
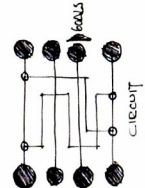
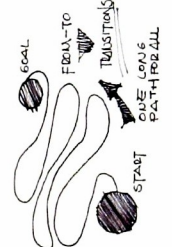
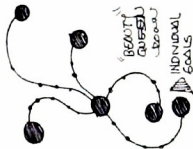
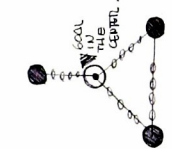
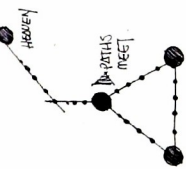
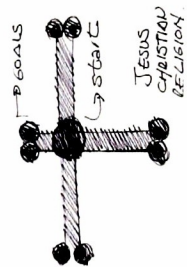
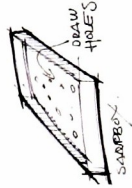
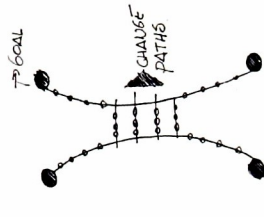
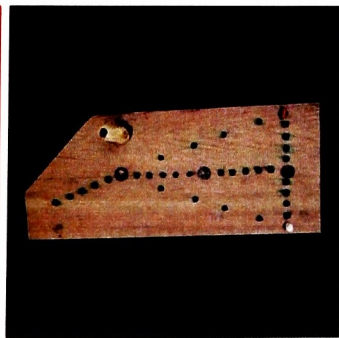


Fig. 12. Design process for board 1

Design process for board

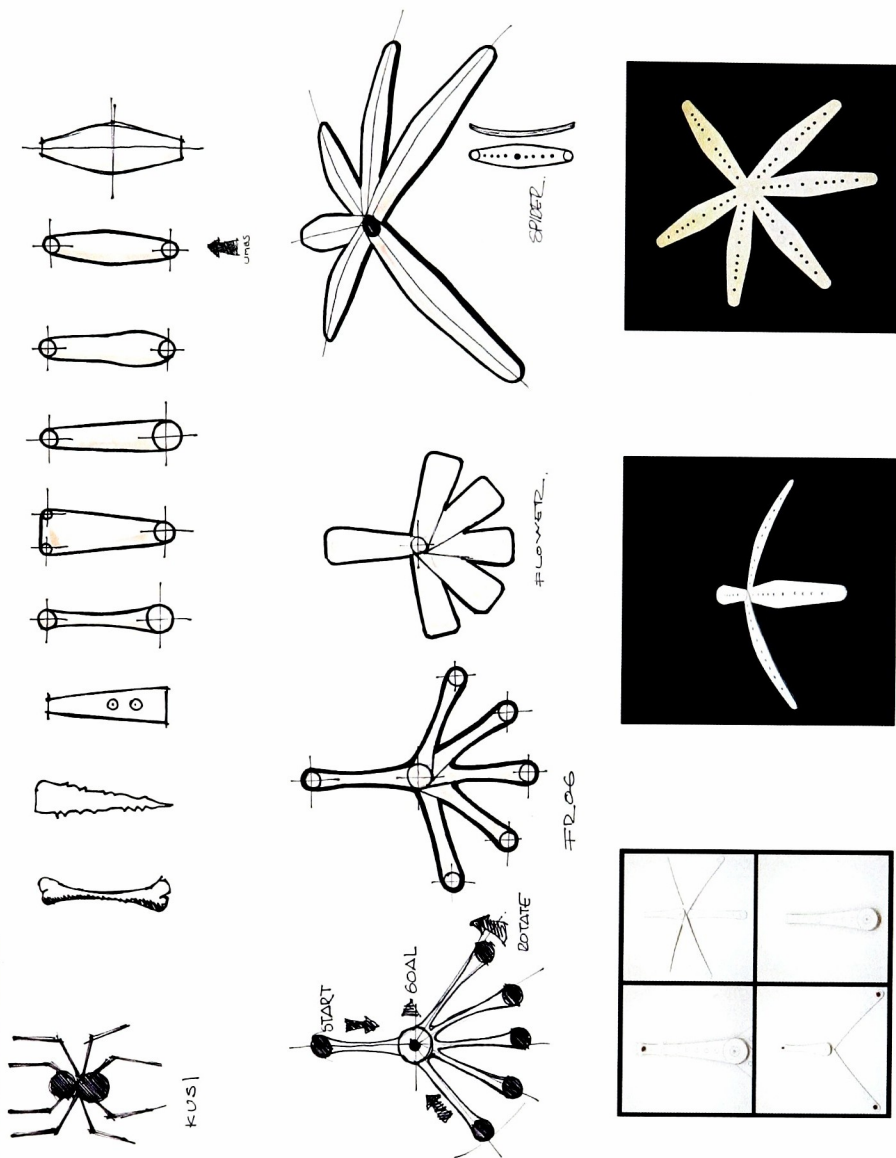


Fig. 13. Design process for board 2



Fig. 14. Design process for board 3

Design of die

The die is probably one of the most representative elements of the original Huayru. Therefore, I decided to keep most of its original characteristics for the design of the die in the new Huayru.

The original Huayru die is the “material” element that persists of the game, almost with no change through time. We can observe samples of Huayru dice in museums, private collections and as part of some indigenous families’ legacy. The basic forms and most of the characteristics are common denominators. For the design of the die in the new Huayru, I tried to preserve most of these characteristics. The die for the new Huayru is a geometric interpretation of the forms of the original dice observed. I preserved the number of sides, the “denomination” of each of the faces and most of the game rules associated with it.

Original Huayru dice are made of a variety of materials, as I previously described. I decided to use wood for the die of the new game. Wood is a warm material, and it is easy to get and shape (especially if we consider production). Wood has also the characteristic potential of “aging well.” The more in contact it is with external factors the more it changes. If these external factors are mostly the oils of the hands that will manipulate the die when playing the game, then the wood of the die will acquire a “usage patina,” a finishing detail added by the users themselves.

The idea of the concentric circles, used in most of the observed original pieces to determine the denomination of the faces, is preserved for the new proposal. The concentric disposition of circles was particularly significant for the ritual world of the Andes. Many of the forms of the ornaments observed in original dice may even been related to the study of astronomy (Ordóñez 2004, 90).

Design process for **die**

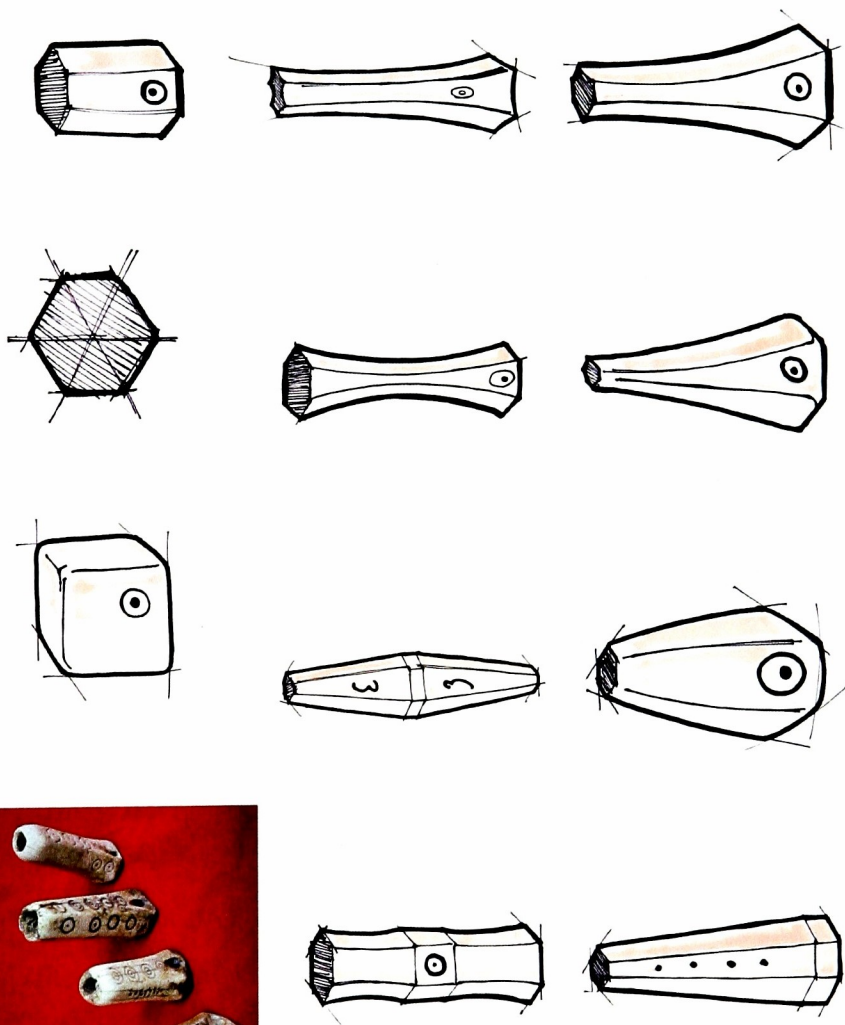


Fig. 15. Design process for die 1

Design process for die

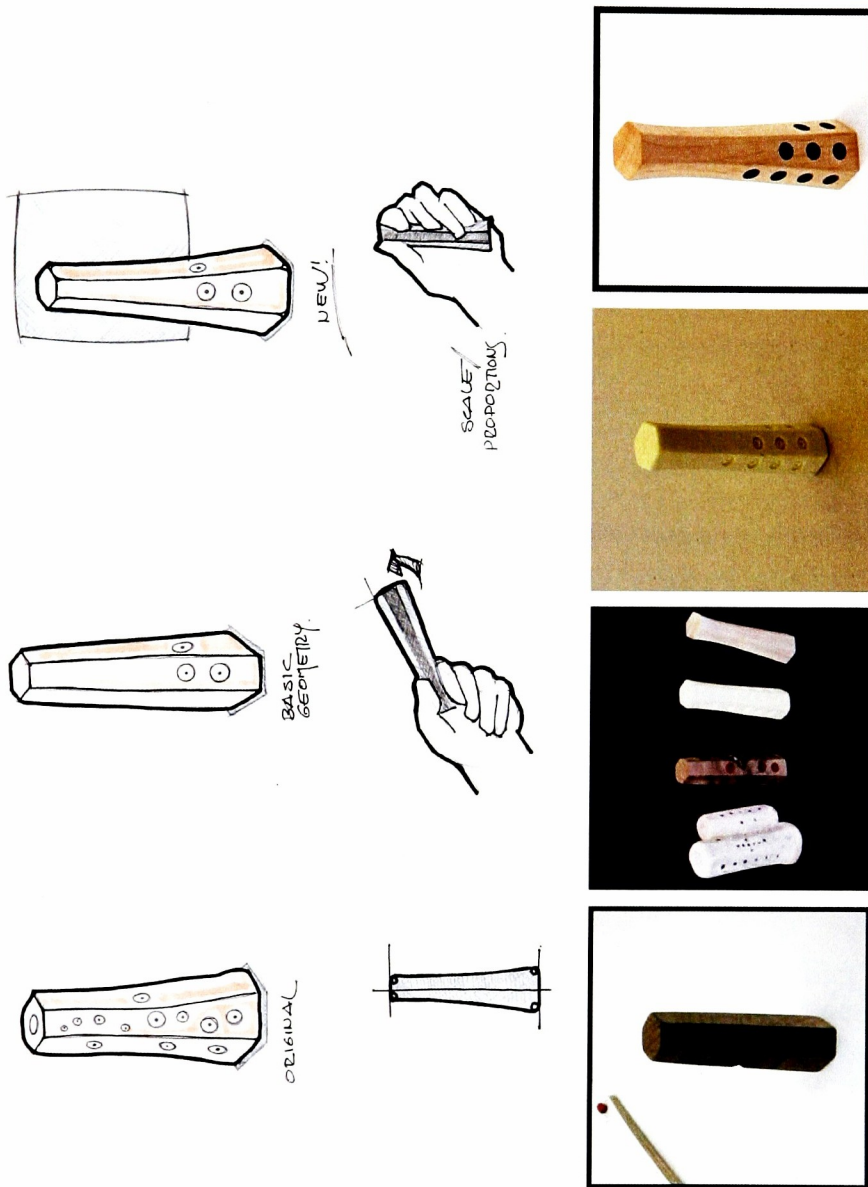


Fig. 16. Design process for die 2

Design of counters

The design of the counters was inspired by the Huayruru seed (*Rhynchosia Pyramidalis*), a seed found in some trees of the South American rain forest, which is considered by some as an amulet and a symbol of good fortune and protection. I found that the *Rhynchosia Pyramidalis* is still well known and used by local crafters in South America.

I had a broad variety of objects to choose from as inspiration for the design of the counters of the new Huayru: corn kernels, many kinds of beans, pebbles, etc. It would not have been difficult for me to choose one of these objects, analyze it within the context of the game and present a design solution properly justified. However, I selected the Huayruru seed as inspiration, even though it was not used for the practice of the original game itself. This decision was made given the high conceptual value of this seed for the world of the Andes and the indirect, yet strong, relationship between it and the whole idea of the original Huayru.

Moreover, in their efforts to understand the game and its implications for the people of the Andean cultures, some authors recur to the obvious relationship between the words Huayruru – Huayru. Ordóñez (2004) comments that the peculiar combination of colors and the striking contrast found in the Huayruru seed (black vs. shiny red) make it exceptional, out of the ordinary and beautiful for the indigenous (Ordóñez 2004, 29). This uniqueness makes it a sacred element for the people of the Andes. The author uses the particularities of this seed to illustrate the relationship between the original Huayru and concepts such as beauty and the sacred in the Andean world. The connections between Huayru and Huayruru are indeed undeniable.

According to the study of Ordóñez (2004), the original game of Huayru plays an important role in the transition between two opposed states of being, such as living and dead. This opposition may be well represented by the two contrasting colors of the Huayruru seed. The indeterminate state of a soul between the moment of death and the afterworld could be represented somehow by the line that divides the red and black zones. This interesting analogy makes the seed an even stronger referential element for the design of the counters.

More specifically, I adopted the combination of colors black – red for the finishing of the pieces. I used ceramic as the production material; it gave me the chance to make each individual counter slightly different, just as one would find Huayruru seeds in nature. The counters are designed to be hand molded, providing an opportunity for the introduction of a sense of “human touch” to the new game. This is especially important given the idea always present in the new Huayru: a soul in transition.

I also borrowed the color combination of the Huayruru seed and applied it in the entire game as a chromatic identity.

Design process for **counters**

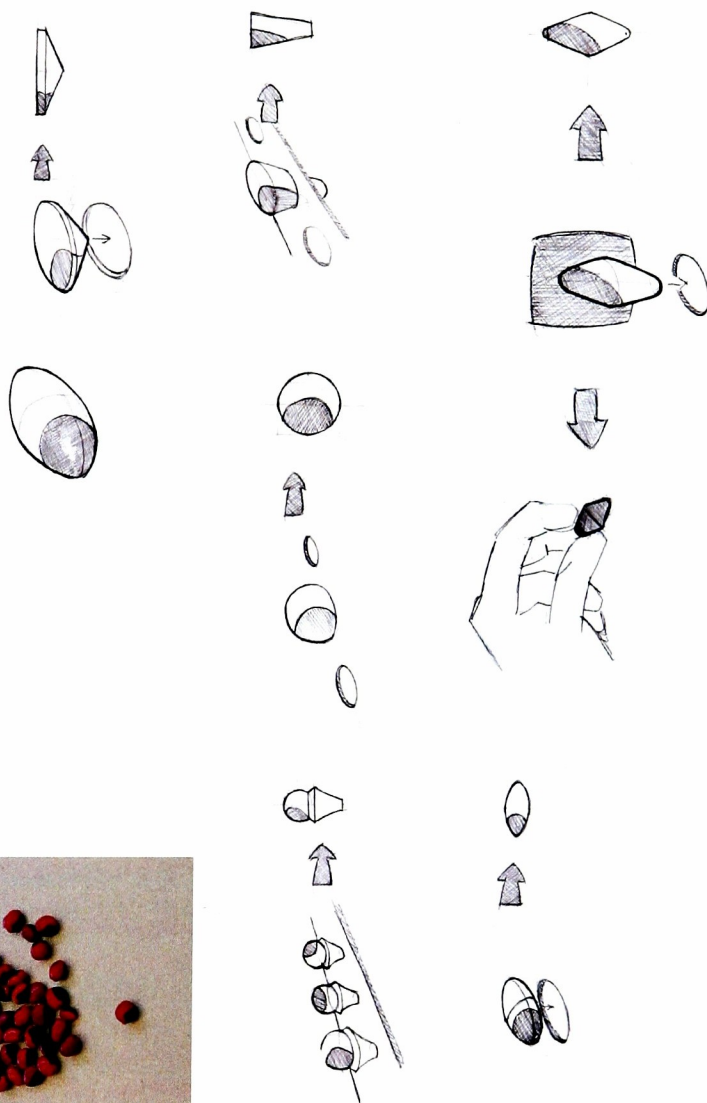


Fig. 17. Design process for counters 1

Design process for counters

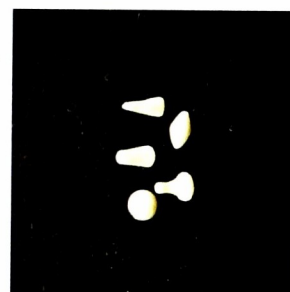
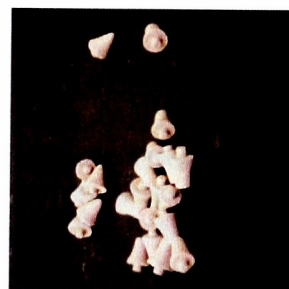
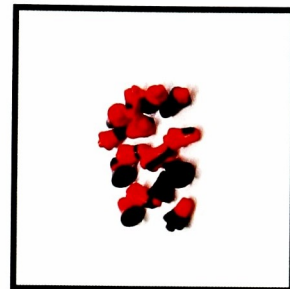
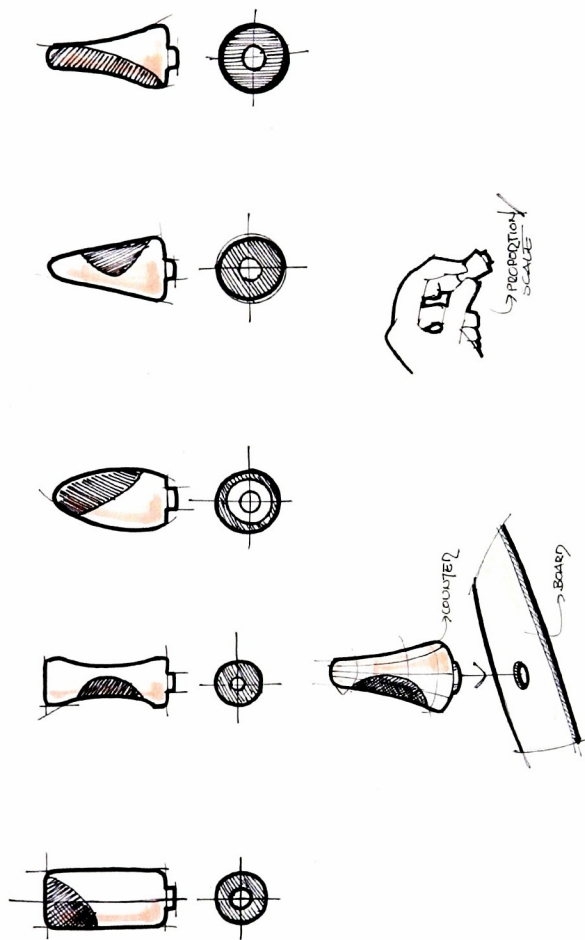


Fig. 18. Design process for counters 2

Design of cards

Designing a new version of the original Huayru represents multiple challenges, especially if we consider one of the objectives targeted by this project: transmission of knowledge about the cultures of the indigenous people of the Andes.

The original game, as generally conceived by the people who practiced it, depends on chance exclusively. There seems to be no tactic or strategy involved. Considering the plain mechanical aspects of every version of Huayru studied so far, it can be observed that outcomes depend only on the way the die falls. This fact leaves us with a limited range of possibilities of introducing, in a direct and simple way, cultural information for the new players using only the original rules as vehicles.

Also, the elements of the original Huayru (board, counters, die) do not display in their shapes and visual nature, a direct and literal reference to pre-Hispanic Andean culture. It may be difficult for a “stranger” merely by seeing, or even playing the game, to recognize its origin, even less, acquire knowledge about its cultural surroundings. Within this context, we could make an analogy to Chess or Parcheesi for example: these are very popular games given the quality of entertainment they provide; however, not many people know about their origins.

Several changes to the shapes and aesthetics of the original game have been introduced for this new version. However, by themselves, these changes do not make the game stand out from others as Andean to the eyes of a possible broad range of players. Therefore, changes to the rules and mechanics are adopted here as a solution. Fortunately, Huayru has extremely abundant cultural aspects related to it, which we could use to make these changes valid and properly supported. The most significant changes are introduced with the Identity Cards, as explained below.

In the new Huayru players are supposed to help a soul rest in peace and reach the afterworld. The player that does it first by reaching the goal has the favor of this soul and wins the game. Now, in order to do so, every one has to have a “companion” given to him/her by an Identity Card. Each one of these cards represents a character chosen from the ritual world of the Andes. It contains information about it and special instructions to follow whenever the players land on a special hole on the board.

In order to avoid confusion, given the great variety of characters that could be chosen from the spiritual world of the Andes and its complexities; it seems to be a good idea to set parameters for their selection:

These characters should somehow relate to the idea of death and, whenever possible, have some connection with some of the various versions of the original Huayru.

Six characters have been chosen as examples for this project. However, there could be many Identity Cards that can be added to the game, opening chances for collecting and giving more possibilities for transmission of cultural information. Following, there is an explanation of the criteria we used for the selection.

Brownrigg (1989), in her article “*Un Juego de Pishca al Huayru en Quingeo, Azuay*,” describes the funerary rituals held by a small community where two games took place at the same time: Huayru and the “Game of Animals.” In this particular case Huayru was played in order to distribute the expenses of the ceremony, legalize the distribution of the belongings of the deceased, and to find out whether or not he was satisfied and in peace. The game of animals was played by six members of the family, each one interacting with the people at the funeral in the following way:

Gata (Cat): this role consisted of acting as a cat and stealing food from the people to distribute it among the other animals.

Cuscungu (Owl): had to scream like an owl, because, according to the tradition, they scream to announce that someone has died.

Gallu (Rooster): had to sing like a rooster.

Burro (Donkey): had to imitate the sounds of a donkey and had to take the clothing of the deceased from the river where it was washed according to the funerary tradition. He also had to attack and chase all of the single women at the funeral.

Rezador (The one who prays): had to say prayers for the deceased in the native language (Quichua).

Mayoral: this role was to gossip and scream insults against widows in the funeral, especially against the widow of the deceased (Brownrigg 1989, 26)

The article describes the entire funeral ceremony in detail, with special emphasis on these two games. It also describes what the consequences of playing them were for the community during and after the rituals.

The characters of the “Game of Animals” are good choices to represent through the Identity Cards of the new Huayru because they relate closely to the idea of death which was selected as the “theme.” Also, there is an obvious relationship between the “Game of Animals” and the version of the original Huayru presented by Brownrigg, given the interaction between these two games during the rituals.

Even though this example of the funerary rituals at this small community may seem isolated, its importance for the knowledge and understanding of indigenous traditions in general can not be denied.

With the introduction of the Identity Cards players have the chance to learn about Andean traditions. Also, these characters make the new Huayru evidently Andean. Who is going to take the soul to its final rest and win its favor, Gata, Cuscungu, Burro, Gallu...?

The text on each of the Identity cards is as follows:

Gata

In some communities of the Andes, Gata (Cat) steals food from those who attend a funeral. Gata has stolen all the food from the family of this soul in transit. The spirit is in pain, the funerals are wanting. Go back to start.

Cuscungu

Cuscungu means “Owl” in quechua, the native language still spoken by some communities of the Andes. It is believed that when a cuscungu screams it is an announcement of someone’s death. The soul is pleased by the screaming of the cuscungu. It brought many people to pray in the funeral. Throw again.

Gallu

In some villages of the Andes, Gallu (Rooster) sings during funerals as part of the ceremony. The singing of the Gallu is an announcement of a new beginning for the soul you are trying to take to the afterworld. Go ahead three spaces.

Burro

As part of the ceremonies, Burro (Spanish for “Donkey”) attacks the single women attending funerals. It also carries the clothing of the dead to be washed in the river for purification. The behavior of Burro has the soul preoccupied. He has attacked many women today. You are out of the game.

Rezador

Rezador means “the one who prays” in Spanish. He attends the funerals and prays for the soul of the dead. The soul is pleased. Game over, you win.

Mayoral

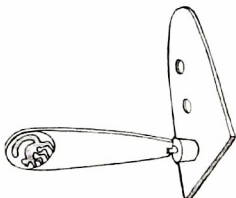
During the funeral ceremonies in some villages of the Andes, Mayoral insults the widows who attend. Mayoral has been too loud and aggressive this time. Go back ten spaces.

It is important to notice that some of these characters own their existence and names to Spanish colonies. We know that donkeys and cats are not considered native species from South America; they were brought by the conquistadors. Nevertheless, they have become part of the contemporaneous cosmovision of the Andes. For this project, the world of the Andes is understood from a broad perspective in terms of time and space. Some characters that meet the criteria for the design of the Identity Cards can be Inca (like Kusi for example); others can be contemporaneous like Burro, etc.

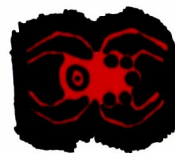
Design process for cards



(Stone-Miller 1995)



(Sonderegner 2003)



Haytu

Fig. 19. Design process for cards 1

Design process for cards

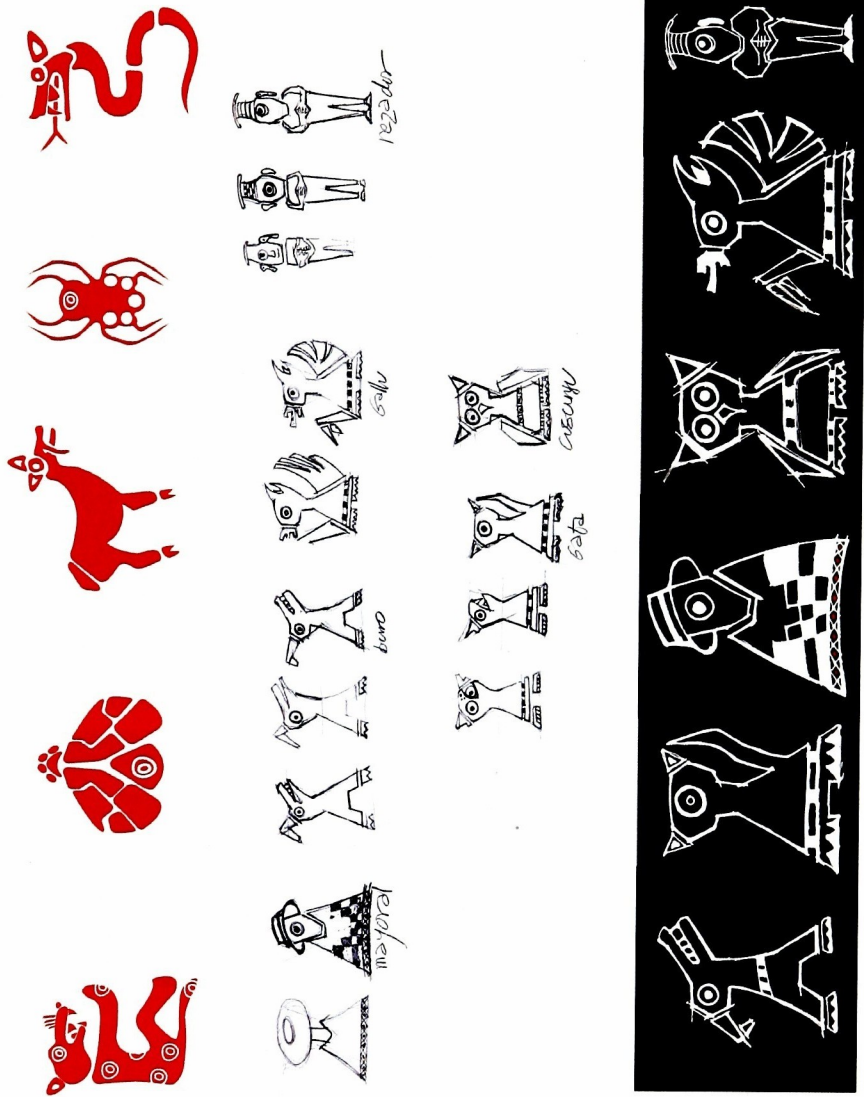


Fig. 20. Design process for cards 2

Design process for cards

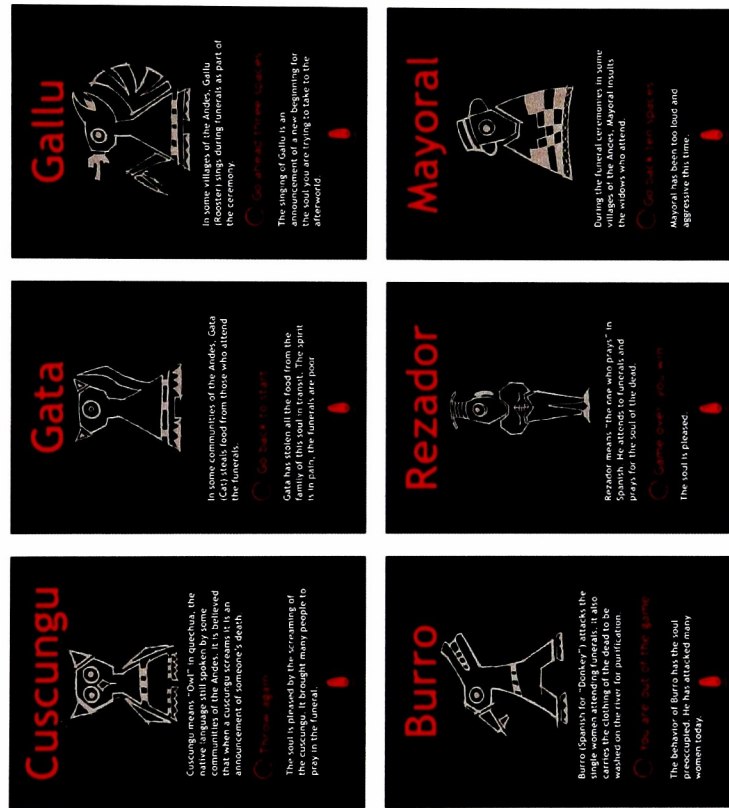


Fig. 21. Design process for cards 3

The concepts

Huayru relates to so many concepts and has so many functions for the ritual world of the Andes, that it may be nearly impossible to introduce and explain them one by one here.

The game of Huayru is linked to ritual moments in which the winning or losing factor transcends the plain competition and gets deep into processes such as legalization and transaction of material possessions, relations of space linked to the social organization of the Andes, aesthetics, agricultural cults, simulation of astronomic movements, cult to the ancestors and the relations between the world of the living and the world of the dead. (Ordóñez 2004, 4, my translation)

From all these ideas related to the original game and its functions in the spiritual world of the Andes, I chose the “relation between the world of the living and the world of the dead” as inspiration for what we can call the “theme.” In the new Huayru the objective of the game is to help the soul of a deceased person to rest in peace and reach the afterworld.

Most of the studies used as reference for this project, define Huayru as a practice that, nowadays, is strictly funerary and analyze it within this context. The variety of authors that have studied the game and the variety of versions and functions they present, make this a conceptually substantial topic; but, at the same time, difficult to analyze as a whole. I have attacked this problem in the ideation stage of the project by making lists of the most remarkable aspects of the game, and by using them in some kind of brainstorming exercise. Here I have chosen some studies only in order to provide an idea of Huayru as a funerary ritual.

A. M. Hocquenghem (1987) presents information about how some of the indigenous in the Andes have historically perceived death. According to one of the some ancient Andean myths quoted by the author, people used to come back to the world of the living just after five days of being dead. His family used to wait him with food and presents getting ready to welcome him. Then he used to feel happy for being alive again and, this time, for eternity.

The story tells that this “resurrection” caused many problems specially related to overpopulation. People started to feel the lack of food and land for crops, they suffered a lot. According to the myth, one day a man died and his family was waiting for him the five days it was supposed to take him to come back, but it took him six. “That sixth day he found his family awaiting in anger, his wife threw a coronta to him, and the just arrived soul disappeared in the air like a fly. Since that day, the dead don’t come back anymore” (Hocquenghem 1987, 96, my translation).

This myth that I tried to condense in few lines, tells a lot about some ideas related to death embraced by the indigenous. First, we can understand now that they believe in “souls” and spirits; then, we could say that it is important for them that this soul reaches a state of rest.

We know now that, the game of Huayru is immediately associated with the funerary rituals, and in some indigenous communities it is still an important part of them. Many theories can be, and have been, coined to try to understand why the game ended up being used exclusively

in this way. It is not a concern of this project, to study these theories in depth; instead, we will describe the game as part of the rituals, trying to justify the selection of the theme of this new version.

Hocquenghem (1987) presents also descriptions made by some other authors, about funerary rituals in some regions of the Andes:

During the five days of a funeral, people play Huayru. The players of Huayru place facing each other, one at each side of the corpse and throw an object made of bone or wood. This object has a pyramidal shape with four or six marked sides, depending on the area where it is found. The faces of this sort of die are marked and are determined by different names and signs, when the die has six sides, there is also an empty face. The belongings of the deceased, his animals, are at play. First his cattle are played, then his birds and finally his cuyes (guinea pigs). If the die falls in a vertical position, that player has good luck and wins. If the die falls showing one of its marked sides, the player has to pay the amount of marks in money. This money then will be used to buy the alcohol to be consumed by those who attend the funeral. If the die falls showing the naked face, the player has to be punished and gets hit on the fingers. Players are supposed to help the soul to reach heaven, and the deceased thanks them by giving them his possessions. (Hocquenghem 1987, 152, my translation)

Notice here how important the game is to the funeral ritual and, with it, to ideas of life and death. There are many descriptions of the game as funerary ritual among the bibliography we were able to gather, some differ from others, but the essential concepts remain.

When working on the field research, I had the opportunity to be more directly in contact with the world of Huayru; the idea of death was especially present. During the first day I found an elder member of the indigenous community and approached to him with a Huayru die that I just had bought in town. I wanted to ask him, first of all, whether or not he could recognize the object in my hands. The reaction of the interviewed was unexpected: he avoided talking about it claiming not to know about the subject and asking me to leave. Was it because the idea of death was symbolized and contained in the object I held? Was it because I appeared as complete foreigner presenting something that belongs to them only? Or he simply was being honest and did not recognize the object. I will probably never know, but this occurrence was a powerful preface for the experience I was about to have during my stay at Sigsig.

At first sight, and especially after this introductory experience, the topic of research seemed to be difficult to talk or find information about. However, the more people I interviewed, the more open I notice they were to talking about the game and explaining rules and ideas behind it. The idea of death and spirits was always there while I made interviews, photographed the various original Huayru sets I found, or simply talking to people. They told me what they knew with no apparent difficulty. I even had the chance to attend a dramatization of a funeral by a family that owned a set of Huayru; this was of course, a resource we had to take advantage of, given the obvious difficulty of attending a real funeral. The game ritual was

similar to those described in the written sources I have been using. There are small details that varied, but again, the essential ideas were still used.

The sole idea of playing during a funeral may sound “strange” and would shock more than one. However, it is something that is still accepted and practiced by some indigenous of the Andes. During research at Sigsig, I did not have the opportunity to experience a funeral where Huayru was used as part of the ritual, but I witnessed a funeral where a different game was taking place: It was around 10 am in a house near the central park of the small town when I saw some people attending a funeral, probably sleepless. They were sitting around a table, talking and playing a card game. Was it possible that people changed the game but preserved the idea of playing? This was later confirmed by a member of the indigenous community: “Nowadays, almost no one plays Huayru in funerals; they play cards and things like that” (personal communication, June, 2005). The new Huayru does not pretend to be a way to convince these people to play the original game again; instead it aims to “tell a story” about traditions, regardless of the cultural and social background of its players.

Also, the constantly recurrent ideas of the original game used as a conflict resolution tool and as a way to determine the distribution of possessions, made me introduce a suggestion for playing the new Huayru: players could determine some prize for the winner or some punishment for the loser. Remember how, for some instances of Huayru during funerary rituals, people determine who pays for the expenses of the ceremony as a punishment, or determine who gets the belongings of the deceased as prize. This also adds play value to the game; it makes it more “fun.”

In conclusion; the strong connection with the original game and ideas about death in the spiritual world of the Andes, the fact that the game is still played as a funerary ritual and my personal experience during the research are used as support for the use of the death concept. The player of the New Huayru will get an idea of how death was, and still is, faced by the indigenous. The new Huayru represents a means of explaining that there are different ways to understand ideas like these in a culturally diverse world and, to a certain extent, provide a chance for the original game to survive.



Huayru

is a game of chance based on a pre-Hispanic traditional game, with the same name, played by some indigenous communities in South America. Huayru lets you have a glimpse at the traditions and spiritual world of its people.

The original game has undergone many changes during its existence. Nowadays, it is played mostly in funerals as a ritual that allows people to be in touch with the soul of the deceased, helping it be in peace. People play this game in funerals to determine who pays for the expenses of the ceremony, to distribute the belongings of the deceased, and to foretell the spirit's will about unfinished business. In the times of the Inca Empire it was played by rulers and princes. It was also played in special times of the year to ask the spirits for help with the crops for example. Playing Huayru was for them a way to solve conflicts and relieve tensions, a way to be in touch with the sacred and the beautiful.

With this new game it is in your hands to keep a spirit in peace on its way to the afterworld. Someone has just died and you and your friends have to keep his soul in peace. The soul will guide the die and determine the winner, the one that has its favors. Special characters guide you in the journey. These characters are represented by Identity Cards that speak to you about the traditions of the great Andes. Play with Gata, Gallu, maybe Kusi and see which one connects you better with the spirit.

The original game was also used by the indigenous as a way to legitimize the transactions between possessions. If you win the game, you win the other players' Identity Cards and can use them in future Huayru matches. There are many identity cards which you can collect and trade through the mediation of the Huayru ritual. If you want to go further, decide what the winner gets before playing. Do you have a conflict with somebody? Is it getting hard to solve? Leave it to the spirits. Leave it to Huayru.

There is a simple path and simple rules to follow, but remember that each move you make has been made for centuries. So, obey the rules and respect them, for every order of the die might mean more than mere chance. Have fun.

- The Huayru team... me.

One of those days, while Tupac Amaru was playing, he noticed a group of beautiful ladies contemplating the games. Suddenly, he fell in love with the most beautiful of them: Kusichimpu. After a while, the prince found a moment to declare his love to her, but was rejected. Desperate by the rejection, Tupac Amaru decided to wander in pain. Reflecting in sadness about his impossible love, he found a spring and sat to cry.

Suddenly, the prince saw a spider, which the natives called Kusi Kusi and have as a good premonition. Encouraged by the good omen of the spider, the prince seduced the Lady with a white flower; Kusichimpu succumbed.

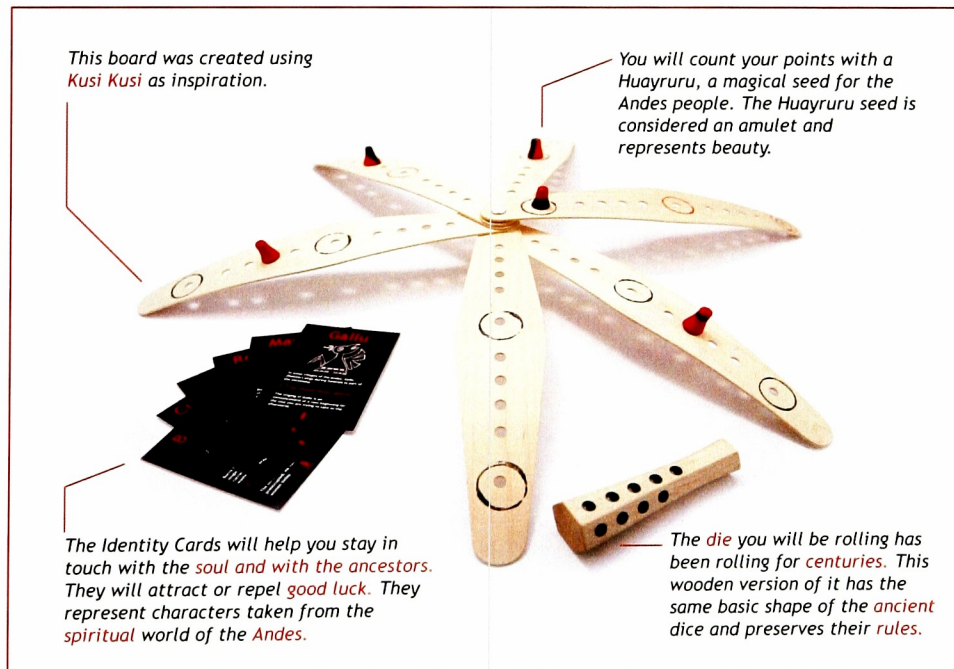
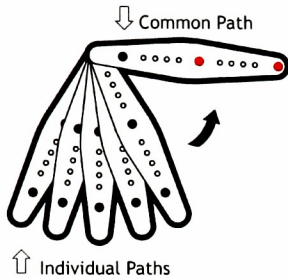
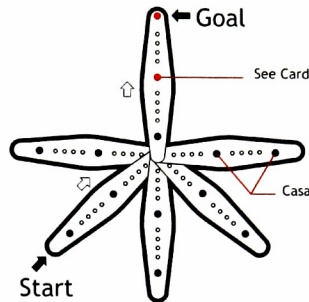


Fig. 22. Concepts in Instruction Manual



PREPARING THE BOARD

- The board consists of six modules called Paths.
- These paths are stacked and can be spread.
- Each player has to choose one Individual Path; these are marked with Black circles.
- The top Path, the one marked with the red circle, is the Common Path.



- The first hole of each Individual Path is each player's starting point.
- The last hole of the common path is the goal. Whoever reaches it first, wins.
- Every fifth hole in the entire board is called "Casa."
- Every Casa is marked by a colored circle.

SELECTING THE IDENTITY CARD

- Each player has to roll the die one time.
- The player that gets the highest score deals the Identity Cards, one to each player.
- Each identity card has a special rule to be followed by the player who lands on the center Casa of the Common Path.

Players can bring their own Cards from a different Huayru set or their particular collections.

In that case:

- Players must surrender their cards and let the dealer shuffle them with the rest.
- The winner gets the other players' Cards.

READING THE DIE



Upright = Win
The spirit is with you

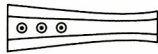
Face up:



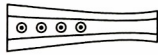
move one space



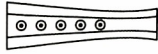
move two spaces



move three



move four



move five. Throw again if you get a 5 on the first turn



Llampu. Bad luck! Lose a turn. Conflicts with the spirit

GAME PLAY

- The objective is to move the Huayruru through the board, from the starting hole to the goal using the die.
- Each player chooses a Huayruru and places it on the starting point of his Individual Path.
- Every player has two initial throws, the one with the highest score plays first, play will continue with the player to his right.
- If your Huayruru lands on the red Casa of the Common Path, refer to your Identity Card and follow its command. These commands are different for each player, depending on the nature of each character.
- If the die tells you to move more spaces than you need to reach the goal, stay at the spot where you are and wait for your next turn.
- If you land on a hole already occupied by another player, go back to the beginning.

Fig. 23. Rules in Instruction Manual

The new **Huayru**



Fig. 24. Concepts applied

CHAPTER 4

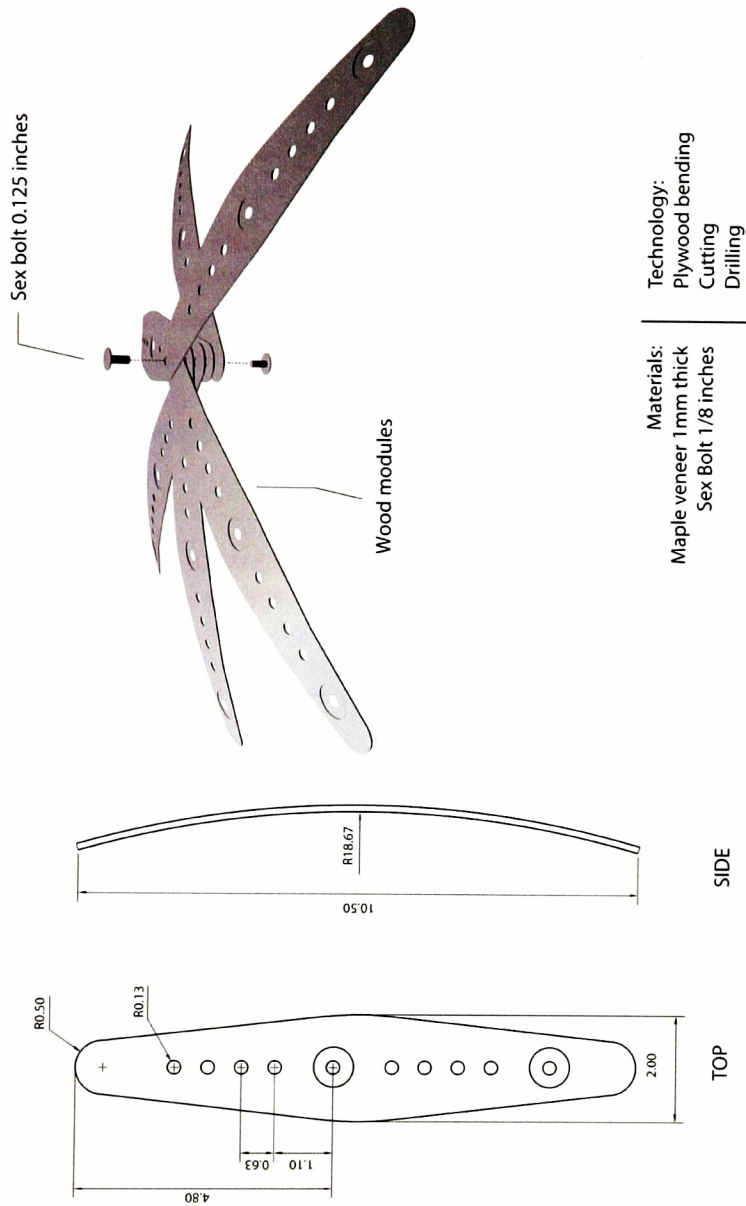
ABOUT PRODUCTION

In order for the object to better achieve the goal of transmitting knowledge about the original traditional game, its production methods should make it as accessible to the public as it is possible. Also, these materials and methods should provide opportunities for the reinforcement of concepts and ideas related to the original Huayru.

I propose materials that are not difficult to acquire, such as wood and clay, and processes that do not present excessively complex challenges. These considerations make the game cost effective and provide opportunities for the production of a considerably large amount of units in a given time. This enhances the potential for the game to transmit its message: the more Huayru games available, the more people will know about it. The shape of the board, for example, is achieved by plywood bending, which requires simple tools and short times. The die requires simple implements for its production as well, such as lathes and hand carving tools. The counters are hand made and hand painted, their shapes do not require excessive attention to detail, which makes them fast to produce.

Now, it can be argued that the use of high technology mass production methods and materials, such as injection molded polymers, would reduce costs and increase production quantities. This may be true but, for the specific case of the new Huayru, these methods would sacrifice its connections with the original Huayru. Proposing hand-made counters, for example, is a way to add a humanistic character to the game. By making evident the touch of the hand of the crafter, my intention is to reinforce the importance of “people” for the understanding of the experience of playing Huayru. Also, the production methods I propose could easily be handled by crafters from the Andes region. This provides an opportunity to take advantage of their knowledge about local crafts, and gives the object even more authority to “speak” about Andean traditions.

I believe I have achieved an adequate potential for production, without sacrificing the concepts to be transmitted. It would be difficult for the new Huayru to present ideas about traditional knowledge, for example, if it were made of plastic by some automated process.



Units: inches Scale: arbitrary



Fig. 25. Technical specifications 1

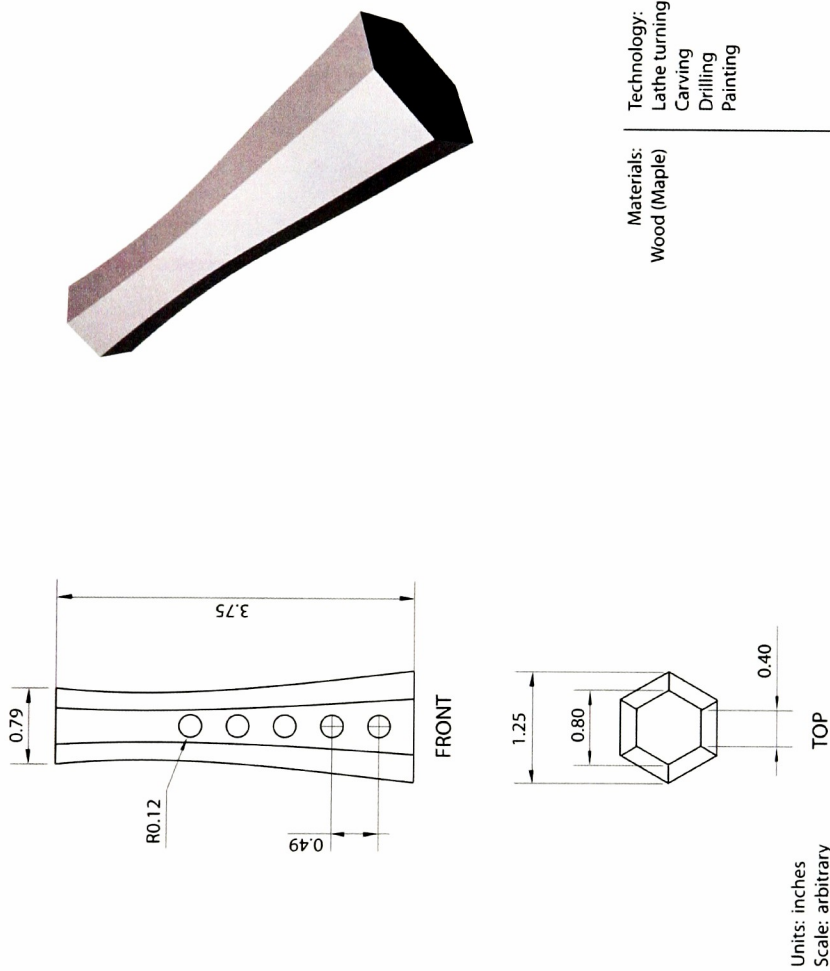


Fig. 26. Technical specifications 2

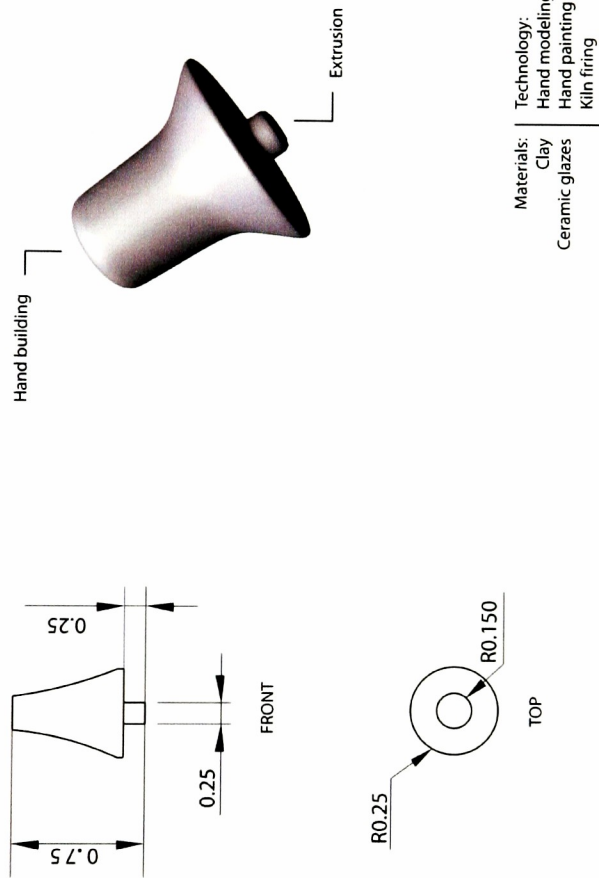


Fig. 27. Technical specifications 3

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Accomplishment of objectives

Let us first remember the goals I proposed to achieve with this project:

The general goal is to demonstrate that design practice can play an important role in the preservation of traditional knowledge. The specific goal is to design a board game based on Huayru with the potential of introducing to the general public basic notions about this tradition and, with them, some aspects of the pre-Hispanic cultures. It aims to rescue the game's memory.

Let us now comment on them:

I have utilized design practice to present an object capable of preserving traditional knowledge. During testing, I noticed players interested not only in the object as a design piece, but also in what it means. I had the opportunity to tell stories about Incas, myths about indigenous communities and facts that I was able to experience in small Ecuadorian villages. I have always had a strong interest for Historical Anthropology and knowledge about cultures of the world; with this project I had the opportunity to combine this interest of mine, with design practice. This, by itself, constitutes a personal achievement.

The new Huayru has the potential of introducing notions about the original traditional game. Whether told by myself in person, by the instruction manual presented in the game package or by the simple exercise of play, traditions as powerful as funerals were being explained in a friendly, fun and easy way. During the research stage, I experienced some difficulty in explaining the original game to people, mainly because all I had were academic texts written by anthropologist and most of them in Spanish. Once I had models and prototypes for the new Huayru, it was much easier for me to do so.

The new Huayru introduces knowledge about some aspects of pre-Hispanic cultures, especially through the characters on the cards. These elements "speak" and inform not only about aspects of the original Huayru ritual, but also about generalities of the great Andes. The Cuscungu, for example, tells us how the scream of an owl means the announcement of someone's death.

The new Huayru keeps the memory of the original tradition. During each and every stage of the design process, from ideation to selection of materials and processes, the original Huayru guided almost all decisions. It is probable that, in the near future, no one in the Andean indigenous communities will play the game in funerals; however, people around the world could remember and learn from it if they played the new Huayru.

Further development

The new Huayru could benefit from more field testing. Due to time restrictions, the number of times the new game was played was limited. In order to improve the game value of it, make it more "fun" and attractive, I plan to get more feed back from actual players. I plan to

explore every possibility to make the game convince people to have it, increasing the opportunities for transmission of knowledge and preservation of memory.

In an attempt to increase the accessibility to information about the original tradition, I plan to take advantage of resources, such as the internet. A web site about Huayru might be a good idea to reach more people and provide more information to the users.

A final thought

When I see people playing the new Huayru, I notice how, in an era where technology develops at an exponential pace and the world fills with “synthetic” values, a simple exercise that has its roots so deep in ancient knowledge and wisdom still exerts positive influence.



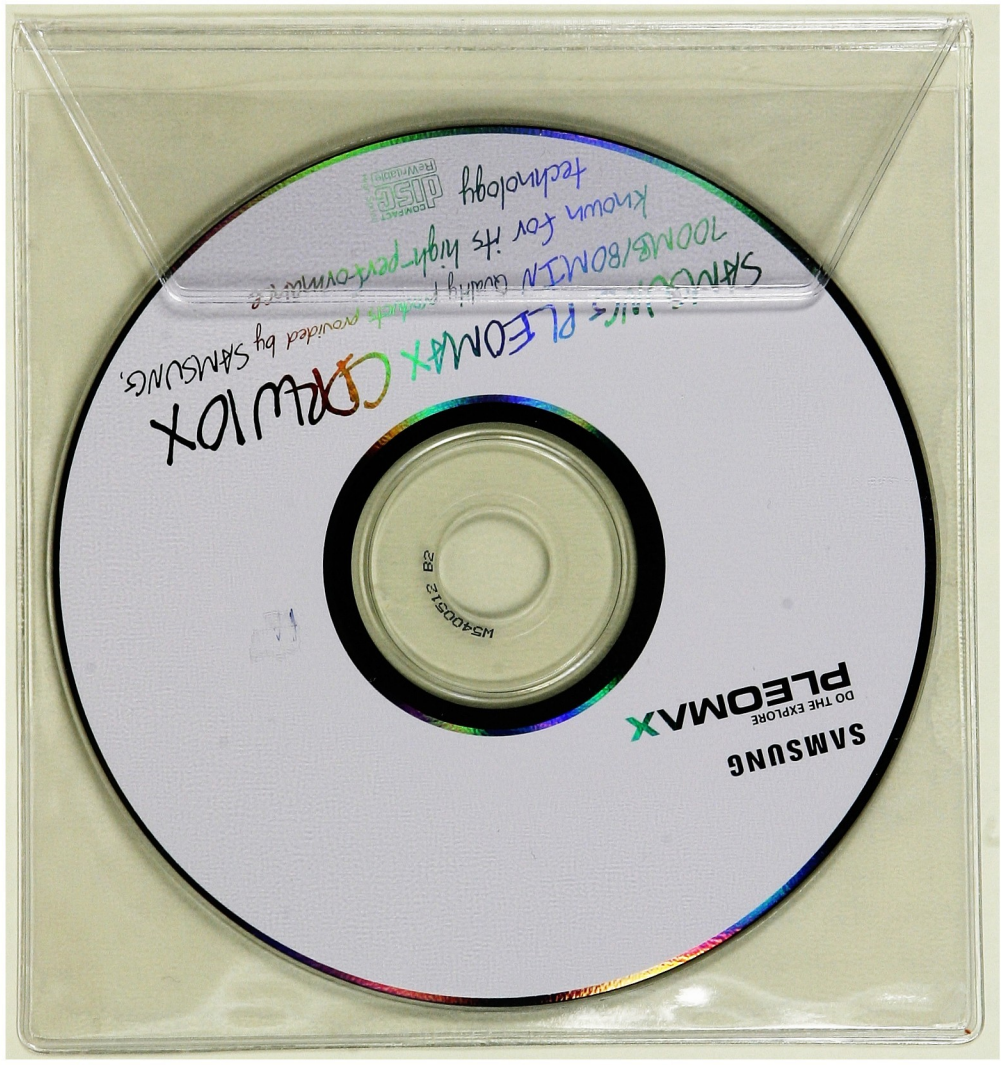
Fig. 28. Original Huayru at Sigsig, Ecuador



Fig. 29. New Huayru at Rochester, NY, U.S.A.

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